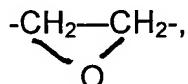


The elected claims stand rejected under 35 USC 102 and/or 103(a) as unpatentable over Jon et al WO 99/18782. Although as the examiner points out, Jon's composition is a dip not a gel, this does not imply that subsequent gel formation of the dip does not occur (see pages 1-2 of the specification).

The novelty of the present invention resides in the use of certain compounds which impart anti-gelling properties to a mixture similar to that disclosed by the reference and others having a propensity to form gels. This is achieved with the addition of one or more of applicants' compounds, namely an inorganic oxide, an epoxidized ester of a vegetable oil and/or an epoxidized ester of OH substituted or unsubstituted high molecular weight aliphatic acid. These compounds are absent from the reference disclosure. What the Jon reference describes are ethoxylated esters containing 9-20 ethylene oxy groups which are surfactants having no effect on gelling.

The structure of the epoxy group, with its free valences on the CH<sub>2</sub> groups, i.e.



is subject to ring opening which ties up free hydroxy groups responsible for gel formation. Conversely, the ethylene oxy group, -CH<sub>2</sub>-CH<sub>2</sub>-O-, lacking ring formation and free valences on both carbon atoms, is a stable moiety and cannot affect gelling.

In clarification of applicants' concentration of component (e), what is intended is that to a composition such as, for example that disclosed by the Jon reference or a similar composition having a tendency to gel, there is added 0.5-20 wt.% of the inorganic oxide and/or the epoxidized oil and/or epoxidized aliphatic acid. Hence the present definition of (e) is correct.

SERIAL NO. 10/077,612

In view of the present amendments and the above discussion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, notice of which is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



Marilyn J. Maue  
Agent for Applicants  
Registration No. 18,869  
Tel. No. (973) 628-3544  
Fax. No. (973) 628-3620

2